

In the Claims

Please cancel, without prejudice, claims 2, 4, & 7; enter additional claims 21-23; and amend claims 1, 8-10, 14, 15, 17, 19, and 20 as follows:

1. (currently amended) An insect swatter comprising:  
an elongate rod having a proximal end for being hand-held, and an opposite distal end for being aimed at an insect; and  
an elastic lash including only a pair of identical annular rubber bands joined together at a knot therebetween, and having a proximal end fixedly joined and retained to said rod distal end, and an opposite and loose distal end sized for being elastically stretched from said rod distal end to adjacent said rod proximal end so that release of said lash distal end spontaneously contracts said lash for swatting whipping said lash distal end in extended striking range against said insect while said lash is retained at said rod distal end without disconnection therefrom.
2. (canceled)
3. (original) A swatter according to claim 1 further comprising:  
a latch pivotally joined adjacent to said rod proximal end for releasably latching said lash distal end; and  
means for selectively releasing said latch to release said lash distal end for swatting said insect therewith.
4. (canceled)
5. (original) A swatter according to claim 3 further comprising:  
a gun handgrip fixedly joined to said rod proximal end; said latch being pivotally joined to said handgrip; and

wherein said latch releasing means includes a trigger operatively joined to said latch for releasing said latch upon pulling said trigger.

6. (original) A method of using the swatter of claim 5 comprising:

stretching said lash by pulling said distal end thereof generally parallel to said rod and adjacent to said rod proximal end, and placing said knot mediate said rod;

latching said lash distal end to said latch;

gripping said handgrip to aim said rod distal end at said insect; and

pulling said trigger to release said latch to spontaneously contract said lash for swatting said insect.

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) A method of using the swatter of claim [[7]] 21 comprising:

~~stretching said lash by~~ pulling said lash second loop to stretch said lash generally parallel to said rod and adjacent to said rod proximal end, and placing said knot mediate said rod;

latching said lash second loop around said latch;

gripping said handgrip to aim said rod distal end at said insect; and

pulling said trigger to release said latch to spontaneously contract said lash for swatting said insect.

9. (currently amended) A swatter according to claim [[7]] 21 wherein:

said latch extends upwardly from said handgrip;

said keyhole slot is open downwardly in a direction opposite to said upward extension of said latch and loosely joins said lash to said rod; and

said lash is inclined upwardly substantially straight

from said keyhole slot to said latch when latched thereto, and said knot is positioned atop said rod.

10. (currently amended) A swatter according to claim [[7]]  
21 wherein:

    said latch is pivotable between a cocked position wherein said latch extends generally perpendicularly to said rod for retaining said lash second loop thereon, and a fired position wherein said latch is inclined forwardly toward said rod distal end for allowing said lash second loop to slip off said latch for spontaneously contracting said lash; and

    said trigger is operatively joined to said latch for releasing said latch to pivot from said cocked position thereof to said fired position thereof upon pulling said trigger.

11. (original) A swatter according to claim 10 wherein said latch includes a thumbgrip extending generally perpendicularly therefrom for manually returning said latch to said cocked position thereof.

12. (original) A swatter according to claim 11 further comprising:

    a spring joined between said trigger and said handgrip;  
    said trigger being pivotable between a cocked position holding said latch in said cocked position thereof, and a fired position releasing said latch for pivoting said latch to said fired position thereof; and

    said spring being positioned for providing a returning force on said trigger to return said trigger to said cocked position thereof upon release of said trigger.

13. (original) A method of using the swatter of claim 12 comprising:

    cocking said thumbgrip to position said latch into said cocked position thereof;

stretching said lash by pulling said lash second loop generally parallel to said rod and adjacent to said rod proximal end, and placing said knot mediate said rod;

latching said lash second loop around said latch;

gripping said handgrip to aim said rod distal end at said insect; and

pulling said trigger to release said latch to said fired position thereof to spontaneously contract said lash for swatting said insect.

14. (currently amended) A swatter according to claim [[12]] 10 wherein:

said lash has an unstretched length;

said rod and latch have a collective cocked length measured between said keyhole slot and said latch in said cocked position thereof; and

said cocked length is selected for stretching said lash to about its maximum stretchable length without breaking thereof.

15. (currently amended) A swatter according to claim [[14]] 10 wherein:

said lash has an unstretched length;

said rod and latch have a collective cocked length measured between said keyhole slot and said latch in said cocked position thereof; and

said cocked length is at least three times said lash unstretched length and said lash has a striking range greater than twice said unstretched length.

16. (original) A swatter according to claim 14 wherein said first and second bands have equal lengths to position said knot midway between said cocked length thereof.

17. (currently amended) An insect swatter comprising:  
an elongate rod having a slot at a distal end thereof;

an elastic lash configured in a figure eight with first and second knot-less loops at opposite ends, and joined together at a knot therebetween; and

said lash first loop is fixedly retained in said slot to prevent disconnection therefrom when said lash is whipped along said rod.

18. (previously presented) A swatter according to claim 17 further comprising:

a handgrip fixedly joined to a proximal end of said rod opposite from said distal end thereof;

a latch pivotally joined to said handgrip adjacent to said rod proximal end for releasably latching said lash second loop; and

a trigger operatively joined to said latch for releasing said latch upon pulling said trigger.

19. (currently amended) A swatter according to claim 18 wherein said lash includes a pair of annular rubber bands joined together in series at said knot, and having a collective spring rate equal to one-half the spring rate of either band the reciprocal of the sum of the reciprocals of the spring rates of each of said bands.

20. (currently amended) A swatter according to claim [[19]] 18 wherein said pair of rubber bands are identical in size, cross section, and material composition, and have equal lengths to position said knot midway between said first and second loops.

21. (new) An insect swatter comprising:

an elongate rod having a proximal end, and an opposite distal end for being aimed at an insect and including a keyhole slot;

a gun handgrip fixedly joined to said rod proximal end;

a latch pivotally joined to said handgrip adjacent to

said rod proximal end;

means for selectively releasing said latch and including a trigger operatively joined to said latch for releasing said latch upon pulling said trigger;

an elastic lash including first and second annular rubber bands knotted together at an intertwined knot therebetween;

said first band having a proximal end forming a lash first loop disposed through said keyhole slot for fixedly retaining said lash to said rod distal end;

said second band having an opposite distal end forming a lash second loop positionable around said latch for being releasably retained thereby; and

said lash is sized for being elastically stretched from said keyhole slot to said latch so that release of said second loop from said latch spontaneously contracts said lash for swatting said second loop against said insect.

22. (new) A swatter according to claim 3 wherein said rod and latch have a collective length from the juncture of said lash proximal end and said rod distal end which is at least three times the unstretched length of said lash.

23. (new) A swatter according to claim 5 wherein said handgrip includes a latch stop adjacent to said latch for limiting rotation thereof when said stretched lash pulls said latch into spontaneous abutment with said stop as said lash distal end is released from said latch to spontaneously contract said stretched lash.